

Westminster Choir College – Department of Music Education

Student Teaching (Clinical Practice) Handbook

Student Teaching Experience

The student teaching experience is designed to be the culminating experience for your undergraduate music education degree program and leads to a recommendation for licensure to teach K-12 music in New Jersey. This is a time when all of your coursework comes together and you start making the crucial transition from student to teacher.



Qualifications for Student Teaching

In order to qualify for student teaching, you must meet the following requirements:

- Classification as a full senior
- Completion of ME 171, 172, 271, 187, 188, 581, 582, PSY 100 **and** either PSY 230 or PSY 231
- Completion of TH 241, MH 247 and PI 204 (voice primary)
- Minimum GPA: 3.0
- Demonstration of aptitude, motivation and potential for success
- Department approval



Student Teaching

Student teaching (ME 591) is a 12-unit course, and is taken in conjunction with ME 587 (Music in Special Education) and ME 595 (Assessing Music Learning). Faculty will take your preference of an elementary, middle, or high school placement into consideration, but preferential placements are not guaranteed.

You will be asked to conduct an interview with your potential cooperating teacher for your student teaching placement, and must meet all district requirements for work as a student teacher. The placement site must offer experiences consistent with licensing regulations in the state of New Jersey. You may not be placed with a cooperating teacher who is one of your former teachers.

Make sure you complete all **clearances** required or your district. NOTE: Some clearances can take several weeks (e.g., fingerprinting or background checks). Allow enough time to have these all completed *before* you begin your student teaching experience. [Note: if you are seeking additional certification in another state, make sure of the state's certification requirements.]

Student Teaching Application and Placement Process

- Once you determine with your advisor that you meet all the qualifications to student teach in the following academic year, submit a [Student Teacher Application and Letter of Agreement](#) along with an advisor-reviewed résumé to Debbie Williamson.

February 1 is the application deadline for all student teaching placements for the following school year. This includes fall and spring placements.

- After Marjory Klein confirms you have satisfied all academic requirements and the Coordinator of Student Teaching has found a cooperating teacher to host you, Debbie Williamson will notify you that a potential placement site has been identified. You must contact the cooperating teacher and arrange an interview within 10 days.
- Once a school district has accepted your placement, you must submit all security requirements to the district by **Nov. 1 for spring placement or April 1 for fall placements**. Delay in submitting these forms may result in non-approval by the district, and will therefore delay your student teaching to the following semester.
- Pending district receipt of an acceptable background check and school board approval, you are approved to student teach.

Student Teaching (Clinical Practice) Registration

- Once the Coordinator of Student Teaching has confirmed that all academic qualifications have been satisfied, you will be green-lighted and be able to register.
- Student teaching (ME 492) is a 12-unit course that includes a weekly seminar. There are two sections of ME 492, one for elementary student teachers and one for secondary student teachers. Make sure you register for the correct section.
- Student teaching is taken concurrently with two 1-credit courses: ME 587 (Music in Special Education) and ME 595 OL (Assessing Music Learning)
- You must register by the last day of spring classes for fall student teaching, or the last day of fall classes for spring student teaching.

Student Teaching (Clinical Practice) Fees

There are a few fees that are associated with student teaching and NJ certification:

- Student teaching fee: \$245
- Praxis examination fee: (please check [NJ Testing Requirements](#) for most current fee schedule)
- Teacher certification fee: \$190 (Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing)

Attendance Policy

- Student teaching (clinical practice) shall consist of a full semester including no fewer than 60 school days. These include days when the school building is closed due to holidays or inclement weather. A school day begins when teachers are expected to report, and ends when the teachers are permitted to leave. There are no excused absences.
- The student is expected to be at their placement every day. Student teachers are expected to take on the full teaching day and related responsibilities of the cooperating teacher. This includes attendance at activities before or after school and in the evening, as well as attendance during in-service, conference, and testing days. The student teaching start/stop dates coincide with the first/last day of classes at Rider. However, during the semester, the student teacher should follow the calendar of the school district where they are placed.
- During the course of the student teaching semester, the student teacher may be required to return to the Westminster Choir College campus to attend special programs. Student teachers must obtain permission from the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor should the student teacher wish to attend a professional conference, audition, or job interview.
- The student is required to inform both the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor if s/he will be absent from school. Cooperating teachers should notify the college supervisor immediately of excessive unannounced absences or tardiness.
- Unexcused absences from field placements are not permitted. Absences determined to be excessive by the cooperating teacher and college supervisor will result in a lower grade. In the event of illness, the student is expected to notify the cooperating teacher, the principal's office, and the Westminster Choir College supervisor. If the total number of sick days exceeds three, days will be made up during exam week at the discretion of the department and the cooperating teacher. If the total exceeds five days, special arrangements will be necessary to make up the days. In some cases, the department may require the student to repeat the entire student teaching experience.
- The responsibilities that accompany the student teaching experience must have priority over all other commitments. This is the general guideline student teachers should remember whenever they make decisions during the student teaching semester.
- Student teachers are expected to attend weekly student teaching seminar class. Beyond ME 492 Student Teaching, students may not register for any courses except for the required co-requisites to be completed concurrent to the Student Teaching (Clinical Practice) experience.
- Students may not present or participate in Westminster-related recitals, choral rehearsals or performances during the semester of Student Teaching (Clinical Practice). At the discretion of the faculty members of the Music Education



Department, variances from these policies may result in a lowered grade or the denial of application for teacher certification. In that event, the student may petition for a hearing with the faculty members of the Music Education Department, and the decision of the Department Chair shall be final and binding.

What Music Education Student Teachers Should Know, Understand and Be Able To Do:

The students in music education at Westminster Choir College should be able to:



- Articulate the goals and objectives of music in the schools and discuss with ease the major curriculum orientations that drive the content of music education in K-12 music education.
- Discuss the major philosophical approaches to music education from both historical and critical perspectives and be able to integrate these ideologies into a personal philosophy of music education.
- Critically articulate the prominent learning theories as they relate to the teaching and learning of music and apply them to classroom, rehearsal and applied studio instruction as appropriate.
- Describe the prominent music teaching approaches (Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze, Gordon, Suzuki, CMP, and Critical Pedagogy) as they relate to the teaching and learning of music and apply them to classroom, rehearsal and applied studio instruction as appropriate.
- Understand the *National Core Arts Standards for Music Education* or the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Music Standards* and describe how they may be integrated into decisions about what to teach, how to teach and why.
- Understand how they are meeting the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards and identify their attainment of these standards in their lesson plans and teaching videos.
- Discuss with significance the current issues music education as found in prominent music education journals.
- Connect the current issues in education to music education in public and private schools in the United States.

Assessment

- It is recommended that assessment be an ongoing process. The cooperating teacher should regularly engage the student in reflecting on their practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Cooperating teachers should feel

free to contact the Westminster supervisor to discuss the progress of the individual students placed in their charge at any time.

- The coordinator of placement at Westminster will provide a final evaluation form for each student teacher. The form should be completed by the cooperating teacher and returned to the college immediately following the conclusion of the practicum experience. This evaluation must be returned to Westminster Choir College before the cooperating teacher can be remunerated.
- Grades for students in practicum courses and student teaching are determined by the Westminster Choir College faculty upon review of the evaluation from the cooperating teacher, evaluations from the university supervisor(s), and successful completion of all seminar assignments.

Student Teacher Expectations

All student teachers are expected to:

- Write lessons that address the diversity of learning styles and engage students in problem solving involving critical thinking.
- Differentiate instruction for students with special needs mainstreamed into the general classroom, and evaluate students using traditional and alternative (portfolio) assessment tools.
- Connect instruction to the benchmarks of the *National Core Arts Standards* and the *New Jersey CCC Music Standards* and advocate for music education in the schools.
- Complete weekly assignments for the weekly student teaching seminar and portfolio development. Cooperating teachers are expected to be supportive of these requirements.
- Prepare a written plan for **each lesson** taught or rehearsal conducted, regardless of the policies of the teaching site or the practices of the individual cooperating teacher. Students are expected to write lessons that adhere to the goals of music education at Westminster as well as those of the cooperating teacher at the practicum site. When there appears to be a discrepancy, the college supervisor should be contacted.



It is the student teacher's responsibility to find transportation to all required events.

Strategies for Success

There are certain things that you can do to ensure your success as a student teacher

- Make sure that you are prepared for every lesson that you are teaching. Make sure you know any repertoire well enough that you can sing or play every part accurately and expressively and recognize errors. Remember, your focus should be on the students when you teach, not on the music.
- Continually practice piano skills and play regularly in class or rehearsals.
- Report early for work in the morning. Coming in late is unprofessional and will therefore impact your grade.
- You are expected to be in your assigned school unless both your WCC supervisor and your cooperating teacher have approved an absence.
- In case of illness, notify your cooperating teacher and your WCC supervisor as early as possible.
- Ask your cooperating teacher how to find out about school closings due to severe weather.
- Operate within the curriculum framework set forth by your cooperating teacher, since s/he is responsible for the musical growth of his or her students.
- When possible, collaborate with the cooperating teacher in the development of learning sequences, or initiate a learning sequence of your own when appropriate.
- Offer to design and implement assessment tasks used for individual student assessment (e.g., rubrics, portfolios, questionnaires, tests).
- Teach all classes and/or performance groups assigned by your cooperating teacher.
- Be an ambassador for Westminster by being positive at all times and not engaging in gossip. Also, be respectful of the cooperating teacher's teaching philosophy and teaching strategies that are in place.
- Always have a lesson/rehearsal plan (with music) available for the cooperating teacher and a supervisor.
- Work out a satisfactory method of keeping records, either independently or in accordance with the cooperating teacher's system, whichever is appropriate to the situation.
- Treat each student with respect, maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude, have high expectations for students' accomplishments, and have a thorough knowledge of your subject/score and method of presentation.
- Be a self-starter. Do not wait to be asked to be helpful and pursue additional learning. Keep cell phones off during class.
- Dress professionally whenever you are at your teaching site. Follow the dress code of the school.
- Continually observe the cooperating teacher's method of dealing with problem students, with classroom/rehearsal management, and with techniques for presenting effective lessons or conducting efficient rehearsals.
- Manage your time and energy in order to remain alert during the teaching day.

- Maintain control of your feelings and emotions and leave your personal problems outside the classroom.
- Maintain a sense of humor and remain calm in tense situations.
- Speak loudly enough to be heard and employ good grammar. Avoid excessive use of slang and casual expressions such as “like,” “ya know,” “you guys,” etc. Every teacher is an English teacher. Do not call female students “guys”.
- Exercising patience is conducive to poise and will help when working with students and staff.
- Display consideration of others. Good manners and courtesy are important. Expressions of gratitude, such as a letter of thanks to your cooperating teacher after completing your assignment, are in order.
- Fulfill the requirements of your college supervisor, and attend required seminars at WCC.
- Your reputation is a valuable asset. Continue to build a positive one. Remember, your cooperating teacher and your supervisor are two of your best references when you apply for jobs.



University Supervisors

In addition to your cooperating teacher, you will work with a university supervisor for the entire semester.

Observations: Your supervisor will schedule six formal observations during your student teaching, about every two weeks.

Function: Observations by the university supervisor provides feedback to you during your student teaching in addition to input from your cooperating teacher.

Format: Typically, an observation consists of a brief pre-conference, observation during a class, and a post-conference. These pre- and post-observation times must be included when scheduling an observation.

Other: Your university supervisor will be a valuable resource to discuss your progress at your placement. They will also be helpful to help address questions or areas of concern that you may have with your student teaching.

Cooperating Teachers

- Upon arrival at the placement site, the student teacher should be briefed by the cooperating teacher on music program objectives, prior musical experiences of classes, and other relevant information.
- Many cooperating teachers have found the following schedule useful in planning the student teaching experience:
 - The student teachers should observe the cooperating teacher in action for one week in order to become familiar with his/ her procedures and techniques.
 - During the second week, students may be integrated into the program and held responsible for short segments of lessons or co-teaching following the music teacher's plans and objectives.
 - As the practicum progresses and student teachers gain proficiency, they may be given more responsibility (at the discretion of the cooperating teacher), culminating in the presentation by each student of one or more complete lessons in accordance with the cooperating teacher's program.
 - Student Teachers are expected to teach entire lessons or conduct entire rehearsals after the 6th week.
- The cooperating teacher shall remain in the classroom or within earshot whenever the student teacher is in charge of the class.
- Westminster students are required to prepare a written plan for each lesson taught or rehearsal conducted, following any format approved by the cooperating teacher and Westminster Choir College, and present a copy to the cooperating teacher for a critique before the lesson is taught. A third copy of all lesson plans shall be prepared for the Westminster Choir College supervisor for scheduled observations.
- Students should arrive at the school site at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the school day and remain until the cooperating teacher leaves.
- If possible, the cooperating teacher should meet with the teaching team either before or after each lesson for evaluation and planning. However, consistent with requirements of the State Licensure Code, cooperating teachers must meet weekly with students in their charge to discuss progress.
- Consistent with State requirements, student teachers are observed six times by a supervisor from Westminster Choir College. In addition, the principal, cooperating teacher, or the student teacher may request additional observations.
- It is requested that the cooperating teacher be able to facilitate the post-observation consultation by teaching any classes that meet during this time so the student teacher and university supervisors have time to meet and talk. If the cooperating teacher is free, they are welcome to sit in on the post-conference.
- Students are expected to complete assignments for the weekly student teaching seminar and portfolio development. Cooperating teachers are expected to be supportive of these requirements, including assisting the teacher in capturing teaching on video for self-assessment.

Cooperating Teachers Forms

The following are forms that need to be completed and returned to Debbie Williamson (Music Department secretary) at dwilliamson@rider.edu:

- W-9 form (due by second week of student teaching) [Cooperating Teacher W-9 Form](#)
- Payment intention form (due by second week of student teaching) [Cooperating Teacher Payment Intentions](#)
- Evaluation form (due before the last day of student teaching) [Student Teacher Assessment Form](#)

Teacher Licensure in New Jersey

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) issues educator licenses to individuals who complete an approved program and pass the Praxis II Music: Content Knowledge exam (Test code: 5113). Information about the exam can be found at [NJ Test Requirements](#) (under “All Grades”).

You **must** list the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE: Code **R7666**) as a score recipient along with your institution (Westminster Choir College Rider University: Code **R2974**). You also must use your social security number when coding for NJDOE to allow your scores to be matched with their certification files.

Praxis Score (minimum): 153

For overview of PA Praxis requirements: [Overview of PA Testing Requirements](#)

Certification

Applicants for certification are processed each year on November 15 and April 15 and at no other time.

Helpful Contacts/Links

- Dr. Al Holcomb, Chair, Dept. of Music Education aholcomb@rider.edu
- Debbie Williamson, Secretary, Dept. of Music dwilliamson@rider.edu
- Dept. of Education: [NJDOE Professional Standards for Teachers](#)
- PA Certification: [PA Certifications](#)

Note:

WCC music students are required to complete a 13-week placement in either an elementary or secondary level general, choral or instrumental music classroom. Except in special circumstances, this site must be outside the student teacher’s home school district.